What is Claimed Is:

1. A method of improving uniformity of plasma etching, comprising the steps of:

etching a wafer with a free radical plasma;

exposing said wafer to infrared energy from an infrared energy source; and

attenuating said infrared energy in a predetermined pattern to reduce non-uniformities.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said infrared energy comprises resonant infrared energy.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said step of attenuating said infrared energy in a predetermined pattern to reduce non-uniformities comprises positioning a filter having a predetermined pattern of variable transmittance regions between said infrared energy source and said wafer.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said predetermined pattern of said filter comprises an outer perimeter having a first transmittance and a center portion having a second transmittance.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said first transmittance is lower than said second transmittance.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein said predetermined pattern of said filter comprises a series of eccentric regions of gradually decreased transmittance.

7. The method of claim 3, wherein said predetermined pattern of said filter comprises a first region having a first transmittance and a plurality of second regions having a second transmittance.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of filtering said infrared energy to have a resonant frequency.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the steps of filtering said infrared energy to have a resonant frequency and attenuating said infrared energy in a predetermined pattern to reduce non-uniformities comprise positioning a filter between said infrared energy source and said wafer.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the steps of filtering said infrared energy to have a resonant frequency and attenuating said infrared energy in a predetermined pattern to reduce non-uniformities are performed by a single filter.

11. A filter for reducing non-uniformities in a plasma etching process, comprising:

a first region having a first transmittance; and

a second region having second transmittance that is different than said first transmittance level.

12. The filter of claim 11, wherein said first region comprises a perimeter of said filter and said second region comprises a center portion of said filter.

13. The filter of claim 12, wherein said first transmittance is lower than said second transmittance.

14. The filter of claim 11, wherein said first region and said second region are eccentric.

15. The filter of claim 11, wherein said second region is positioned to reduce transmission in areas where said plasma etching process experiences magnetic field cusping.

16. The filter of claim 11, wherein said filter comprises optical quality glass having a layer of metallic coating of a predetermined thickness.

17. The filter of claim 11, wherein the thickness of said layer of metallic coating varies to form said first and said second regions.